

## **Board of County Commissioners**

### **Agenda Request**

Date of Meeting: May 20, 2003  
Date Submitted: May 15, 2003  
To: Honorable Chairman and Members of the Board  
From: Parwez Alam, County Administrator  
Lillian Bennett, Assistant to the County Administrator  
Subject: Consideration of Alternatives to the Current Board Meeting Schedule

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#### **Statement of Issue:**

As requested by the Board, this agenda item presents potential alternatives to the Board's current meeting schedule for Board review and consideration.

#### **Background:**

At the April 22, 2003 meeting, the Board directed staff to bring back an agenda item that presents alternatives to the Board's current meeting schedule. The Board expressed that alternatives include ways to reduce the number of Board meetings held each month and include any annual cost savings that could be realized as a result.

Currently, Board meetings are held each Tuesday except for the first Tuesday of each month. This meeting schedule usually results in a total of three (3) to four (4) Board meetings a month, depending upon the number of Tuesdays that fall in each month. There is a total of 30 Board meetings scheduled for the 2003 calendar year.

#### **Analysis:**

Board direction to explore alternatives to the current Commission meeting schedule was prompted by a concern with the small number of agenda items the Board convened to consider during the month of April. To determine the feasibility of changing to a reduced number of Board meetings, this agenda item presents the following information:

- Comparisons to Other Florida Counties
- Current Board Meeting Activity
- Potential Alternatives/Cost Savings

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### **Comparisons to Other Florida Counties**

In order to compare the Board meeting schedule of Leon County to other counties in Florida, staff has prepared a summary of the Board meeting schedules of the sixty-seven (67) counties in Florida (Attachment #1). This comparison includes the County population and meeting schedule of each County. Based on this review, staff has reached the following conclusions regarding the Board meeting schedules of Florida Counties as shown in Table #1:

**Table #1 -Comparison of Meeting Schedules of 67 Florida Counties**

	Once a Week Meetings	Every Week except one	Two Meetings a Month	Three Meetings a month	Four meetings a month	Once a Month Meetings	Total
# of Counties	8	6	46	4	1	2	67
Percentage	12%	9%	69%	6%	1%	3%	100%

The data in Table #1 shows that 69% or 46 out of 67 Florida counties hold two regularly scheduled Board meetings a month. Six (6) Florida counties or 9% conduct meetings every week except one each month which is similar to Leon County. The six include Leon, Broward, Manatee, St. Lucie, Sumter and Indian River Counties. Eight (8) counties or 12% percent hold once-a-week Board meetings. In addition to the summary above, Table #2 reflects the Board meeting schedules of like-sized counties in Florida. The table provides the population and the actual meeting schedule of each County.

**Table #2 - Like Sized Counties Meeting Schedules**

County	Population	# of mtgs a month	Meeting Schedule	County	Population	# of mtgs a month	Meeting Schedule
Alachua	228,371	2	2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesdays at 9:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.. public hearings	Leon	248,039	3 to 4	Every Tuesday(except 1 <sup>st</sup> Tuesday)at 5:00p.m.
Collier	277,457	2	2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday at 9 a.m.	Manatee	277,362	3 to 4	Every Tuesday at 9 a.m.-except 2 <sup>nd</sup> Tuesday (work sessions)
Escambia	299,485	2	1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Thursday, Public Forum at 4:30p.m., & Board Meeting@ 5:30p.m.	Marion	271,096	2	1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday at 9 a.m.
Okaloosa	176,965	2	1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays, 8:30 a.m. & 6 p.m.	Bay	152,186	2	1 <sup>st</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday at 9 a.m.

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As shown in Table #2, of the eight like-sized counties, Manatee County is the only County that has a meeting schedule similar to that of Leon County. The remaining six (75%) of the like-sized counties (Alachua, Collier, Escambia, Marion, Okaloosa and Bay), have two regularly scheduled meetings a month. The times of the meetings vary from mornings to evenings. It should be noted, that the City of Tallahassee and the Leon County School Board holds two regularly scheduled Commission meetings a month.

Of the fourteen (14) largest counties in Florida with populations in excess of 300,000, nine (9) or 64% have two regularly scheduled meetings a month. The counties include Miami-Dade (pop. 2,312,348), Duval (pop. 800,304), Pasco (pop. 361,456), Pinellas (pop. 933,972), Polk (pop. 502,241), Seminole (pop. 387,286), Hillsborough (pop. 1,054,560) and Volusia (pop. 459,569). This demonstrates that counties' issues can continue to be addressed effectively, even with a reduced number of Board meetings. Again, the times that the large counties hold their meetings varies from morning to evening as shown in Attachment #1.

#### **Current Board Meeting Activity**

To determine the feasibility of a potential reduction in the number of regularly scheduled Board meetings held each month, staff has performed an analysis of the content of the agenda outline of Board meetings held over the past year (May 2002 - April 2003). This review includes a break out of the number of agenda items presented each meeting, as well as the category in which these items were presented: Consent, General Business and Public Hearings. The review also includes the number of public speakers for each meeting and the number of hours required to complete each meeting. Finally, the analysis provides an annual average of activity for each category presented (Attachment #2).

An analysis of the information provided in Attachment #2 is summarized in Tables #3 and #4:

#### **Summary of Board Meeting Activity (May 2002 - April 2003)**

**Table #3 - Number of Board Meetings, Public Speakers and Length of Meetings**

Total Number of Board Meetings held annually	Total # public speakers annually*	Total # of agenda items presented annually	# meetings held in 2 hours or less 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.	# meetings held within 2 to 4 hours 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.	# meetings held over 4 hours 9:00 p.m. to 11:30 p.m.
30	285	817	6 or 20%	12 or 40%	12 or 40%

**Table #4 - Average Activity Per Meeting**

Average # of Agenda Items	Average # of Consent Items	Average # of General Business	Average # of Public Hearings	Average # Public Speakers*	Average Meeting Ending Time	Average Length of Meeting
27	17	7	3	9	9:00 p.m.	4 hours

\* The actual number and average # of public speakers on agenda items is dependent upon the issue presented. For example, there were 34 speakers on the Iraq resolution, 19 on the Broadcast Tower permitting, 18 on the Lake Lafayette SDZ.

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The length of a meeting has much less to do with the number of agenda items presented and more to do with other factors such as the time allotted for public speakers, Board discussion and the number of public hearings presented at each meeting. As shown in Attachment #2, there does not appear to be a direct correlation between the number of agenda items presented and the length of a Board meeting. For example, at the April 29, 2003 meeting, there was a total of 29 agenda items which included six (6) public hearings and five (5) public speakers. The Board meeting lasted for six hours and ended at 11:00 p.m. However, in comparison, the September 17, 2002 meeting consisted of a total of 51 agenda items which included eight (8) public hearings and fifteen (15) public speakers. The meeting lasted for 5 ¼ hours and ended at 10:45 p.m. The analysis does show that meetings which require extended time (11:00 p.m. or more) usually have an average of five (5) or more scheduled public hearings. The Board may want to consider designating one Board meeting a month specifically for the purpose of conducting public hearings. In addition, the Board may want to consider setting a time limit for public speakers on issues coming before the Board.

**Alternative Meeting Schedules and Cost Savings**

There are certain added costs that are incurred for each Board meeting held. These include overtime salaries and other operating expenses. Although the majority of the County staff who attend Board meetings are senior management and no additional salary expense is incurred, there are some indirect costs in addition to those employees who are paid overtime for functions used to support Board meetings. The following is a breakdown of these additional costs:

Additional Cost	Cost per Meeting (Based on average of 4 hours per meetings)	Annual Cost - 30 meetings
Bailiff's (3)	\$25 per hour	\$9,000
Communications Specialist/MIS (2)	\$25 per hour	\$6,000
Facilities on call employee (1)	\$25 per hour	\$3,000
Board Clerk (1)	No direct cost (Normally Compensatory time)	0
Food and Serving Supplies*	\$213 per meeting	\$6,390
Utilities	Minimal to no savings (Temperatures controlled by computer and A/C is not turned off at night. Savings from lighting is minimal.)	0
Agenda Copying, Production and Supply Cost	\$900 per meeting	\$27,000
<b>Total Estimated Annual Direct Cost</b>	<b>\$1,713</b>	<b>\$51,390</b>
Indirect Cost (Sr. Management Employees)	\$1,131 per hour (30 staff) or \$4,525 per mtg	\$135,750
<b>Total Direct and Indirect Cost</b>	<b>\$6,238</b>	<b>\$187,140</b>

\*This cost may vary, depending on whether or not a workshop is held prior to the Board meeting.

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The Board could choose to reduce the number of Board meetings held each month which would reduce the \$187,000 annual direct/indirect cost to hold Board meetings. Alternative meeting schedules are presented below for Board consideration:

1. Conduct two regularly scheduled Board meetings a month on either the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday or the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of each month. The number of meetings held annually would drop from 30 to 22. This alternative would result in reduction of 8 meetings annually and a direct and indirect cost savings of approximately \$49,904.
2. Conduct regularly scheduled meetings on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month and hold Public Hearings only on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month. This alternative would allow for a separate meeting to be set aside specifically for public hearings each month. This alternative also allows regular Board meetings to be scheduled earlier in the day if the Board so chooses and public hearings held in the evening to allow for citizen input. No meetings would be held on the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday and 5<sup>th</sup> Tuesday (if applicable) of each month. This alternative would result in a reduction of 2 meetings annually and a minimal cost savings of approximately \$12,476.
3. Maintain the current schedule and authorize the County Administrator to review the content of the draft agenda outline submitted for each meeting and advise the Chairman if a meeting can possibly be cancelled and agenda items carried over to the next scheduled meeting. The Chairman would then notify the full Board by the Wednesday prior to the scheduled Board meeting. The public will also be notified of any changes in the meeting schedule.

Due to the potential impact of previously scheduled meetings, public hearings, joint City/County comp. plan meetings, etc. already set on the 2003 calendar, it is staff's recommendation that the Board direct staff to develop an implementation schedule and bring back an agenda item for Board review and approval.

### **Other Issues**

The Board has recently scheduled five (5) District Community Meetings to present budget issues impacting the County. These community meetings will be held in August and September 2003. In addition to the Community Meetings, at the April 29<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Board directed staff to schedule meetings with FAMU, FSU and TCC students. This came at the request of Larry Rivers, Student Government Association President, FAMU, after expressing student concerns regarding the impact of University Park.

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It is recommended that the Board direct staff to contact the student government associations of each educational institution to identify acceptable on-campus alternatives to full-scale County Commission meetings that involve dialogue concerning local government, economic development or other issues of interest to students. Staff can research the existence of opportunities for the Board to take part in panel discussions, and forums or other presentation formats deemed appropriate. In summary, staff has presented the following information for the Board to consider in adopting a reduced number of Board meetings:

- 69% of the Counties in Florida have two (2) Board meetings a month.
- 75% of like-sized counties in Table #2 above hold two (2) Board meetings a month.
- 64% of the larger counties in Florida with populations in excess of 300,000 hold two (2) Board meetings a month such as Miami-Dade, Hillsborough and Pinellas Counties.
- Locally, both the City of Tallahassee and the Leon County School Board hold two meetings a month.
- Estimated \$50,000 in annual direct/indirect cost savings as a result of holding only two (2) meetings a month.
- Leon County can continue to effectively address County issues by holding two (2) Board meetings a month.

**Options:**

1. Direct staff to reduce the Board meeting schedule to two regularly scheduled Board meetings a month on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of each month and to develop and bring back an implementation schedule for Board review and approval.
2. Direct staff to reduce the Board meeting schedule to two regularly scheduled Board meetings a month on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month and to develop and bring back an implementation schedule for Board approval.
3. Direct staff to schedule regular Board meetings on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays of each month and conduct Public Hearings on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month. No meetings would be held on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays(if applicable) of each month. Direct staff to develop and bring back an implementation schedule for Board review and approval.

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4. Direct staff to maintain the current Board meeting schedule and authorize the County Administrator to review the content of the draft agenda for each meeting and advise the Chairman if a meeting can possibly be cancelled and agenda items carried over to the next scheduled meeting. The Board and the public would then be notified accordingly. This option can be adopted by the Board immediately.
5. Direct staff to establish a time limit on public speakers addressing issues before the Board.
6. Direct staff to contact FAMU, FSU and TCC student government associations to identify opportunities for the Board to take part in on-campus student government activities.
7. Board Direction.

**Recommendation:**

Board Direction

**Attachments:**

1. Florida Counties Meeting Schedules
2. Board Meeting Activity (May 2002 - Aril 2003)